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ABSTRACT

Issues of accountability in enterprises that provide educational services at the individual and institutional levels are explored in this paper. Two conceptions of accountability are addressed: accountability as measurement and as ethics. A major source of confusion is the disagreement between the two ways of thinking about the meaning and implication of accountability Accountability as measurement stresses objectivity and empirical measurement, and accountability as ethics places trust in subjective but rational judgment. However, both perspectives are incomplete in that they fail to critically address the sociopolitical context and its effects on the work of schools and teachers. Conclusions of this study point to the need to recognize accountability as a multidimensional issue, having different definitions and measurements valid for certain situations. An extensive bibliography of about 250 items is provided. (LMI)

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SASKATCHEWAN INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT & RESEARCH UNIT

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ISSUES IN ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SASKATCHEWAN SCHOOLS

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Researcher/Writer:
Elizabeth Cooper, M.Ed.

Project Advisors:
Cyril Kesten, Ph.D.
Doug Stewart, Ph.D.

SIDRU Research Report No. 9
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Faculty of Education, University of Regina, Regina, Sask. S4S 0A2

ISSUES IN ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SASKATCHEWAN SCHOOLS

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by
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

All adults in any society may be said to be accountable for their actions to all other adult members of their society. All persons must act in ways which are not harmful to other persons, adult or child. Certain adults may also be held accountable for certain special kinds of actions. For example, persons who provide services essential to others are held accountable for the quality of those services. They must provide good service and do no harm to others (Langford, 1985). These statements seem quite straightforward and uncomplicated. In practice, questions related to the issue of accountability are very complex. This paper explores issues of accountability in enterprises intended to provide educational services.

Two conceptions of accountability are called, in this paper, 'accountability as measurement' and 'accountability as ethics'. A third section of the paper explores the related notion of the accountability of institutions. A final section suggests a third way of thinking about accountability and provides a concluding summary.

Accountability entails the preparation and presentation of an account, or a story, of the performance of a task or responsibility. The account is presented to the persons who have primary responsibility for the successful completion of the task by the persons who have been delegated the task. The purpose of such an account is to enable those who have primary responsibility to determine the success, or to judge the quality, of the performance of those to whom the task was delegated. This determination must proceed in ways which are acceptable to the society as a whole and be accomplished through the use of standards which are also socially accepted. Both individuals and institutions may be held accountable. Both individuals and institutions may render accounts; however, the means and the criteria by which information about performance is gained and evaluated are different when judging the performance of individuals or of institutions.

One way to think about accountability is to assume that it is something which may be measured whether one uses accountability to mean a procedure or to mean a characteristic. Discussions which assume that it is possible to measure the outcomes of schooling and to objectively describe or measure the work of teachers and schools share one fundamental belief. They are certain that teaching can cause learning. The problem, for persons who hold this belief, is to discover the most effective program, the most effective methods, and to see that teachers use them systematically, rigorously and faithfully.

The dominant set of beliefs in American education in the 20th century is based upon the assumption that the work of educators and of educational institutions consists of a series of discrete tasks, which if properly carried out, will result in observable, measurable changes in or additions to the knowledge of students. Persons holding this set of beliefs also assume that it possible to measure these changes or additions objectively. That is to say, if several evaluators separately but carefully followed the same methods when gathering and analyzing information about the performance of students, teachers, and schools, each would reach similar conclusions about the success or failure of those students, teachers, and schools in the tasks which they were required to perform. Persons holding this set of beliefs discount any influence of individual values and perceptions on

the judgment of those to whom educators are accountable. They discount, too, the effect of individual values and perceptions on the production of accounts by those to whom such tasks are assigned, whether they are persons external to the institution or persons within the educational system which is being required to produce an account and explanation of its performance. Accountability, for persons holding these assumptions, is a matter of showing that you have done what you were required to do in the most efficient and effective way, or of explaining what prevented you from doing so, and stating what you plan to do to overcome the difficulty. The problem which faces persons holding these views is the need to be sure that the methods and programs used by teachers are capable of causing the results they are intended to cause. If results are to be measured, standards must be accurate and reliable, means must be proven to be capable of leading to the results ascribed to them. Causation, or the possibility of causation given effective performance of educational tasks, must be clearly and evidentially established if teachers or schools are to be judged, within this framework, to have done their jobs well or badly.

The second most common way of viewing accountability assumes that trust and responsibility are to be expected in social relationships. Central to this view is the assumption that persons are capable of judging their own performance, of rendering accounts to themselves as well as to others, and of working toward the perfection of their performance without outside coercion. If this is so there can be no accountability without trust. We trust someone to do a job well. If we did not we would not delegate the responsibility for it to him or her. We allow that person to use resources which we entrust to him or her for the accomplishing of the task in as satisfactory a manner as can be reasonably expected. A basic belief here is that if a person is to be held accountable for the performance of a task, that person must be truly capable of its successful completion. That is, the person must have both the opportunity and the capacity to do it. When we say that a person is responsible for something we mean that we expect him or her to act in certain ways, in certain kinds of situations, and that we have a right to ask for explanations of, and perhaps retribution for, any actions which do not contribute to the successful accomplishment of the goal. If a person does not have the freedom of action which is the result of trust, that person cannot be said to be truly responsible for his or her acts and therefore cannot be held accountable for the quality of his or her performance, the results of the acts, or the non-performance of the task.

An ethical view of accountability asserts that educators are responsible persons. They must be trusted to do their jobs well and to see that newcomers to their profession are equipped to do so as well. They are accountable for being knowledgeable and for using their knowledge in the most useful ways presently known. They are accountable for practices which will enable their students to become competent, knowledgeable persons as well. Education is seen, not as a commercial enterprise producing a standard product, but as an infinitely variable realm of content, skill, and decision making, within which the professional educator works to maximize benefit to his or her students by ensuring that they understand human experience as completely as they are able. Teachers are competent, autonomous professionals who are accountable to themselves, their students, their colleagues, and to society for the proper conduct of their professional duties.

It is possible to talk about and plan for accountability procedures in terms of schools as organizations using the assumptions of both the measurement and the ethical orienta-

tions toward accountability. However, as we have seen, a school can only be accountable in terms of the actions and beliefs of its teachers. While it is possible to consider these actions and beliefs collectively, the school can only explain its successes or failures and plan for change in terms of the individuals within it. It is simply confusing to talk as if a school could do anything, including being accountable. It is the people in the school who do the work and who must be held, and/or, hold themselves accountable.

Accountability is a diverse and slippery concept. When you add to it the diversity which is found in all talk about education, it is little wonder that it is so difficult to be clear about educational accountability.

There are many valid ways to approach the topic and to require that educators and teachers be accountable. The overwhelming faith in simple solutions which has often marked educational discussion and action in North America is very dangerous. We must be always aware that there is more than one kind of accountability. There are many ways to determine the worth of the work of teachers and schools. If we are interested in observable ends we may determine accountability using empirical means. If we are interested in less tangible goals we may determine accountability using rational means. Whatever means we use, teachers are not machines, they are human. We must not forget that. We must not let our concern for accountability put our educational systems out of balance. The tangible and the intangible are both necessary to the education of human beings. We must determine accountability without making one of the kinds of goals and means of education more important than the other. This requires clarity.

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INTRODUCTION

All adults in any society may be said to be accountable for their actions to all other adult members of their society. All persons must act in ways which are not harmful to other persons, adult or child.

Certain adults may also be held accountable for certain special kinds of actions. For example, persons who provide services essential to others are held accountable for the quality of those services. They must provide good service and do no harm to others (Langford, 1985). These statements seem quite straightforward and uncomplicated. In practice, questions related to the issue of accountability are very complex.

This paper explores issues of accountability in enterprises intended to provide educational services. It is intended to provide a kind of 'map of the territory' of accountability in education. The map is drawn by describing the variety of meanings which educators and others interested in education give to the concept 'accountability'. These meanings can then be compared and as a result it may be possible to understand some of the confusions which arise in discussions about educational accountability. A conceptual map enables people to understand more clearly the issues and discussions in which a term which has more than one commonly used meaning is used. Accountability is such a multifocused concept. In order to draw this map several questions are asked and the variety of answers to each which appear in educational literature, and in the literature of related professions, are described. This is done in several parts. First, questions which any discussion of accountability must address are posed. Then two major ways of talking about, and coming to understand, accountability are explored. These two conceptions of accountability are called, in this paper, 'accountability as measurement' and 'accountability as ethics'. A third section of the paper explores the related notion of the accountability of institutions. A final section suggests a third way of thinking about accountability and provides a concluding summary.

BASIC QUESTIONS ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY

What is Accountability?

What is meant when we use the term 'accountability'? Langford (1985, pp. 80-81) says ".....people may be said to be the authors or agents of their actions in the sense that their actions originate with them and therefore that they may be said to be responsible for the changes which they bring about or cause by their actions." Actions are always attributed to some specific actor. People, as actors, are believed to be aware of their actions and therefore able to choose to act, or not to act, in certain ways because they believe that their actions will lead to the fulfillment of some goal. Actions, in the way in which we are using them here, are different from automatic responses of the nervous system such as blinking. Therefore, while, ordinarily, persons in our society do not cen-

sure someone for an uncontrollable physical movement such as blinking inappropriately due to some nervous affliction, we do consider it correct to censure persons for actions which they are able to control, and which society considers to be inappropriate or harmful to others. Also, while we do not blame a cat for killing a mouse, because it is in their nature to do so, we do blame a person for killing another person or for killing anything unnecessarily or cruelly. Persons are considered able to think before they act and therefore are expected to act in ways which society believes to be correct. It is for this reason that we hold people accountable for their actions and for the results of their actions. "Persons, also, are aware not simply of their situation and their effect on it but also of themselves as in and acting on that situation" (Langford, 1985, p. 81). Persons are capable of recognizing an action as being theirs. They are also capable of understanding that others attribute that action to them. This means that people are able to hold themselves accountable for their actions and the results of those actions. They are able to recognize that they might have acted differently. Thus, they are able to choose to act correctly.

How Do We Know if Someone has Acted Well or Badly?

1. The role of values and standards.

   In order to make decisions about the 'goodness' of their actions, or of the actions of others, people must have some standards or criteria which represent the proper action. They can then compare the action being judged to these standards. "You cannot consider wisdom or folly, progress or decadence, except in relation to some standard of judgment, some end in view" (Whitehead, 1933, p. 7). Standards are the result of social agreements. Over time a society builds a code composed of rules, laws, traditions, or moral imperatives, which serves as the standard to which all individual action is compared. Some standards are accepted by almost all persons in almost all societies. For example, it is possible to find the moral rule 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you' in every major religious and moral code. These standards are upheld by broadly accepted religious or philosophical arguments. Whitehead calls these 'higher generalities' and makes the point that they are often expressed in stories or in other non-specific ways. As a result there may be many interpretations as to what actions are, or are not, in accord with these broad standards.

   Other standards are particular to certain cultures and societies. Matters of appropriate dress for certain persons are good examples of this, as the Scottish and Greek soldiers' formal kilts, which look like women's skirts to others, show so clearly. Sometimes one set of standards directly conflicts with another in ways which make it very difficult to solve questions regarding correct action. Good examples of this may be found in the rules which various societies have developed to govern the behavior of women, and of men towards women. This is especially evident when persons from societies holding very different beliefs about correct behavior in regard to women come to live together in one large city such as Vancouver or Toronto.

All standards express the values of the persons and social groups who hold the standards to be the basis of proper action. Values are what enable us to label one action as good and another as bad. Ultimately values cannot be verified. They are matters of belief and so can be shared but not proven. They can be shared when persons share experience and language. If the experience and language of people are sufficiently alike there will be agreement about standards and proper action (Langford, 1985). Wilson (1967, pp. 133-138) holds the view that agreement is possible between all of mankind on certain values. He believes that if only people know enough about the results of certain actions they will agree about what is correct. "We disagree about the criteria for human values, because we do not know much about human beings, and because we do not admit our ignorance, preferring prejudice instead."

2. What gives someone the right to demand an accounting of someone else?

It appears that this is a matter of social convention as well. Some actions are private and not subject to the assessment of others. Religious beliefs and family life provide examples of these actions. Yet certain religious beliefs are not tolerated even though they may be sincerely held. Human sacrifice would provide an extreme example. It would violate the standard which says persons must not harm others. Yet of course in certain instances, many people believe that it is correct to harm others, or even kill them in self defense, whether personal or as part of the defense of the interests of one's nation. The same patterns can be seen in regard to family life. Child abuse, for example, is generally considered to be the concern of the society as a whole, even when the actions considered abusive are those of a parent and take place in the privacy of the home.

It seems clear that all persons may be concerned about the actions of all other persons in certain cases and must not be concerned with other actions in certain other circumstances (Langford, 1985). The difficulty is to know which is which. Standards on many issues vary. This is clearly seen when parents defend in the courts their right to use certain forms of discipline with their children which others in society consider abusive. The questions, 'For what is a person to be held accountable?' and 'To whom is a person accountable for various kinds of actions?' are very complicated.

3. What does it mean to say that someone is 'accountable'?

Literally, being accountable means that a person is required to give an account of some action or actions to someone who may properly expect such an account and who has the right to evaluate or judge the actions of the person rendering the account. An account is a story which is told to describe a certain action or set of actions. The story is told by a person who has received a duty in order to explain or justify his or her actions. The story provides a history of those actions and allows persons receiving the account to evaluate both the actions and the results of the actions. An account will also often anticipate criticisms which may be made of certain actions and provide explanations of the actions which are designed to soften those criticisms (Langford, 1985). This sounds quite simple, but is in fact and in practice quite complex. It is often very difficult to decide whether or not a person is

truly accountable. Did he or she really have the opportunity or the ability to act correctly? Did the actions of the person really lead to the result or were there other factors which complicated the matter and which mean that the person did not really have the opportunity or the ability to control the result? For example, if a person, driving down the street, observing the speed limit, hits my little dog as it runs across the street, is that person responsible for its death? Directly, yes. The car which the person controlled hit the dog and it died. It is easy to see the evidence of this on both dog and car. But did the person have a reasonable chance to avoid hitting the dog? Could the person have stopped in time? Was the person reasonably alert? Could the person possibly have seen the dog? If the person had swerved to avoid the dog would he or she have damaged property or hit another person? Would the driver have been hurt if he or she had tried harder to avoid the dog? Is it reasonable to destroy property to save a dog? Is it reasonable to risk harm to a person to avoid hitting a dog? What about the dog's owner? Am I accountable for what happened? These are matters of judgment where a variety of standards and values might be applied.

In enterprises such as education although individual persons may be held accountable for their actions, institutions or organizations may also be said to be accountable for the effects of their programs, products, or the actions of their employees, on persons. What is the nature of organizational accountability? Langford (1985, p. 96) says that while we hold persons accountable when we have reason to believe they have acted wrongly, we hold institutions accountable for achieving the purposes for which they have been created. If he is right then individuals are only occasionally called to account, usually when there is some reason to suspect that they may have acted wrongly. Institutions, however, are always accountable. They must regularly provide accounts which show that they have fulfilled the purposes for which they were created or which give reasons why they have failed to do so. Individuals, when they are working in these institutions, must accept this requirement for constant accounting as a part of the role which they take when they agree to work in the institution. Unfortunately, this set of statements, which also seem simple, is open to a variety of views, as will be seen.

4. How should we react to the accounts provided by persons who are accountable to us?

As we have seen we may only ask for accounts when we have a legitimate concern according to the laws and traditions of our society. According to Langford (1985) the reactions which we may make to these accounts are based on those same laws and traditions. We may ask for reasons and explanations. We may reward or demand improvement or compensation. The actions which people take in response to accounts provided to them must always be appropriate to the purposes which the original activity was intended to meet. This means that we cannot censure a person or an institution for doing badly, or not doing at all, things which are not part of the purpose or relevant to the goals of the activity in which they were engaged and for which they are being held accountable (Langford, 1985, p. 91). This is also much more difficult to determine in regard to education than appears at first glance. What are the goals and purposes of education? Even a cursory review of works about these goals and purposes shows a wide variety of beliefs about what schools

and teachers ought to be doing and thus about what they should be held accountable for doing. It is generally believed that for much of western history schools were run by religious institutions. Their first duty was to ensure that the student was equipped to act in such ways as would result in the salvation of his or her eternal soul. Skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic were needed only by those who would be clerics and do the business of God and the Church. Skills of war and government were needed by those whose God-given role was temporal rule of others. Those who would work the land would learn to do so from their elders. A major break in this view of the purposes of education came when universities were established in Italy and in Paris. Men became interested in knowing for its own sake. Expanding trade in Europe also expanded the demand for the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. Towns and cities grew and so did the need to understand how to govern and to defend. Today, as a result of industrial and technological life, these needs and wants are much further expanded. Yet many of the old expectations are still present and valid too. Religious goals, vocational goals, knowledge for its own sake, are all still part of what we expect of education. A vast array of goals are possible. Given all of this, how are we to decide for what to hold schools and teachers accountable?

QUESTIONS ABOUT EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The disagreements which surface in discussions about educational accountability may be traced to confusions of several views of the nature of accountability, and of the means by which we are able to determine the worth or effectiveness of specific instances of education.

There are two sets of questions which must be explored if we are to be clear about educational accountability. We must decide who it is that we are holding accountable. We may believe that we should hold schools accountable for effective, worthwhile education. We may also believe that we should hold individual teachers accountable for 'doing a good job.' We must also be clear about that which we are insisting schools and teachers do well. Do we want schools and teachers to be accountable for the results of education or for ensuring that the processes or practices of educators are the best that may be used?

In fact we usually seem to want all of the above. It seems reasonable that we should. However there are some significant philosophical and practical difficulties inherent in the questions. We often do not recognize these contradictions when we are talking about, or doing something about, educational accountability. The consequences of failing to recognize the contradictions inherent in our talk and our action with regard to accountability are considerable confusion, disagreement, and, too often, failure to achieve the basic purpose of all the concern about accountability, the achievement of the best education possible for all members of our society.

Individual and Organizational Accountability

When we think about holding educational institutions accountable we quickly recognize that they are composed of individuals. These individuals do the work, and render the accounting which we require of the school. But there is an important difference between people and schools with regard to accountability. People are able to hold themselves accountable, as we have seen. A school, or any other institution, can only be judged or evaluated by persons, either those persons working within it, or persons who are not a part of it.

We generally evaluate institutions through a series of actions. First we attempt to describe or measure the results attained by the institution, whether it be a quantity or quality of cars, or the results of students on tests and their apparent ability to use what they have learned. Then we judge or evaluate those results using standards of performance and results derived from previous performances or from expectations about those performances and results. As we have seen, since organizations are formed for a certain purpose, we expect them to be constantly accountable for the achievement of that purpose.

Individuals, on the other hand, because, unlike organizations, they are able to hold personal values and to judge themselves using those values, are usually treated differently. Individuals expect, and so do we most often expect of them, that they will do their work well because that is the morally or ethically correct thing to do as well as because they are contractually accountable to someone else for what they do. That is to say we recognize that individuals are able to hold themselves accountable and that organizations cannot do so. Thus, factors which are part of the belief and value systems of individuals enter into the determination of individual accountability. These factors are often not apparent to someone who is attempting to describe or measure the actions, and results of the actions, of individual persons. We cannot measure by current means accurately the performance of persons. Individuals, because they are capable of holding their own expectations and values for the proper performance of their work, must be judged on more than an objective measurement of results. This is further complicated when we realize that students, whose learning is the result of education, are also persons capable of holding expectations and values with regard to their own education. Thus it is not possible to objectively measure their performance and ascribe it solely to the actions of their teachers or of the schools which educate them. Because this is so, we commonly judge individuals using standards which derive from values rather than from the objective measurement of standard performance, as is the case when we judge institutions. We may measure the performance of an institution and compare it to a standard which is derived from observing the performance of other institutions. We must judge the worth of individual action by standards which are derived from societal values.

It must not be thought that this dichotomy is as simple as it has been made to appear here. Institutions are composed of individuals and so the issues are always clouded. However, this analysis allows us to sort out a group of propositions which at first appeared to be a simple assertion--that education ought to be effective and worthwhile.

We can now see that individual accountability may not be the same kind of thing as organizational accountability. It may mean something quite different to say 'The teacher is accountable' than it means to say 'The school is accountable.' We can also see that it is possible to hold both schools and individuals accountable for results, for using the best known practice, or for both. We can see that the fact that schools are used by individuals, who may hold purposes and values which are different from those of their teachers, makes the issue of educational accountability much more difficult than issues of accountability in organizations which produce an objectively measurable product, such as an automobile. Generally speaking, however, when we look at educational accountability in this way we are able to see that we usually hold individuals accountable for effective practice and schools accountable for appropriate results.

Measuring and Judging

A third common confusion is now apparent. Quite properly we usually attempt to measure results, while we make judgments about practice. This is probably because we often feel able to quantify results but have not yet developed any way of seeing practice which would enable us to describe it using numbers. Also quite properly, we expect individuals to be at least partially able to determine the worth or effectiveness of their own work. We assume that institutions cannot make such determinations although we do assume that the persons within the institutions can make judgments about its effectiveness and worth. Our problems begin when we become confused and attempt to measure the practice of individuals in the same way in which we measure the results of institutions, or when we attempt to judge the performance of institutions as if they were individual persons. When we make these attempts we are frustrated.

Individual persons, acting in accordance with their own beliefs and values, resist our efforts to standardize their actions, so we are unable to measure them with any degree of objective accuracy. We often are unable to capture any other than the trivial aspects of their actions. The only way out of this frustrating dilemma is to accept the fact that, at least for the present, the work done by persons, by students and teachers, in educational institutions cannot be measured accurately. We can only make a judgment of the value and worth of that work based on as much and as carefully screened evidence as is possible, according to standards which are based on values accepted by the majority of the community. We judge their work.

Educational institutions are also difficult to evaluate, but for different reasons. They produce a wide variety of results, as wide a variety as there are students and staff within them. It is difficult to determine which results are positive and which negative. For some of the more easily described and commonly agreed upon purposes of education (teaching the skills of reading or mathematics) we are able to measure the results of a school against a standard determined by aggregating the results of all schools and determining the standard of performance which is common to all effective schools. For other, more complex, purposes of education (enabling all graduates of that school to analyze problems and devise workable, morally acceptable solutions) we find that we have much more difficulty. We have difficulty agreeing upon a fair standard as well as in measur-

ing results. Even if we can agree upon a standard of performance for graduates in any particular complex goal of education we may find it difficult to trace the causes of the acceptable or unacceptable performance by a certain student who has been educated in a particular school. Causes are hidden in the complexity of an organization which is intended to produce changes in persons rather than specific non-human products, as well as in the diversity of values and beliefs held by the students and teachers who form the organization. Only a few of the products of schools are immediately obvious and identifiable. Very likely many of the results of schools, good or bad, are never recognized as being such. As a result, persons wishing to determine the effectiveness of schools may find themselves concentrating only on that which they can grasp, and overemphasizing those results which are both important and can be reliably measured while underemphasizing those results, also important, which are difficult to grasp. Programs based on such overemphasis of the measurable are seriously out of balance and ignore goals of education which all parents and community members, if asked, agree to be important. Schools then stand in danger of becoming institutions whose focus is too narrow to be useful to the society which they serve.

In our attempts to ensure that we have the best possible education for all those in our society we have often confused interpretation and causation. That is to say we have made the mistake of thinking that because two things are obviously related one of them must have caused the other. Because a good school produces students who can read and write and do arithmetic well, we have assumed that this means that it also produces persons who are well educated in all of those other less tangible but very important purposes of schooling. Because a student can tell us the formula for solving a problem we have often assumed that the student understands both the problem and the solution. When this happens the result can be directly the opposite of what we want from schools.

Summary

Accountability entails the preparation and presentation of an account, or a story, of the performance of a task or responsibility. The account is presented to the persons who have primary responsibility for the successful completion of the task by the persons who have been delegated the task. The purpose of such an account is to enable those who have primary responsibility to determine the success, or to judge the quality, of the performance of those to whom the task was delegated. This determination must proceed in ways which are acceptable to the society as a whole and be accomplished through the use of standards which are also socially accepted. Both individuals and institutions may be held accountable. Both individuals and institutions may render accounts; however the means and the criteria by which information about performance is gained and evaluated are different when judging the performance of individuals or of institutions.

The next section of this paper examines the history and the various elements of these practical and philosophical questions as they appear in educational literature. This is done in order that the reader may understand how the issue of educational account-

ability may have come to be as difficult, confusing, and productive of confrontation as it appears to be today.

Two major approaches to issues of accountability will be described and their history in western European and North American education briefly explored. It is suggested that each is based on one of the two ways of understanding the world which have dominated European thought since the days of ancient Greece. A third way of viewing the issues, also based on the two basic worldviews, is gradually introduced. A brief argument for this third way, as capable of resolving much of the confusion and argument, and of meeting the goal of ensuring a good and useful education for all members of our society concludes the next section. A final section of the paper summarizes the approach which has been taken to the issue of educational accountability in this paper.

VIEWS OF EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Two Ways to Find out About the World

Whitehead (1933, pp. 135-138) says that there are two main ways of arriving at new ideas. One, we may speculate, try to understand, but not require certainty. He quotes Plato who said that we should not be surprised if we could not make our explanations of the world "wholly consistent and exact" but should be content to produce "an account no less likely than another's." Two, we may require exact measurement and proof before we accept an idea or a value. Whitehead calls this the way of scholarship and credits its introduction into Western civilization to Aristotle. Aristotle had a passion for systematizing and for careful investigation. Whitehead reminds us of two things, first, that both of these ways of learning about the world are necessary if we are to learn as much as is possible, and second, that these two means of coming to know are often wrongly seen as antagonistic to one another. In reality, he believes, we must speculate, or reason from what is to what may be, if we are to create any new knowledge and we must be scholarly, examine things carefully and systematically, if we are to build a reliable foundation of knowledge upon which to base practice and future speculation.

These two views of how to discover and to validate knowledge are reflected in talk about accountability. Some persons believe that only through careful measurement of resources and of products can we determine whether or not an educational institution and its personnel have carried out their responsibilities well. They often appear to believe that what teachers and schools do directly causes students to learn some specific thing. Others believe that the purposes of schools are too many and too diverse to be open to such direct application. These persons believe that to determine whether or not a school or teachers have done well, we must rely more heavily on values and on subjective human judgment. These persons appear to believe that teaching, and all the other events of schooling, are useful ways to encourage learning but they do not necessarily cause learning.

Gertenbach (1973, pp. 86-89) addresses these issues. He also describes these two ways of finding out about the world but calls them rationality and empiricism. By rationality he means to reason or to deduce from accepted general principles to new ideas and applications of those principles. By empiricism he means to observe and to derive general principles from an analysis of what is observed. If we were to use this language to talk about accountability we would say that empiricists, who attempt to learn about the world by observing, measuring, and analyzing the concrete events of daily experience, would wish to carefully observe, describe and analyze the work of schools and teachers in order to decide how well they were doing their jobs.

Rationalists, who attempt to learn about the world by reasoning from the known to the unknown, and who assume that there is more to understand about human action than can be determined from descriptions of behavior, would want to speculate about possible and probable results of education as well as to describe and make value judgments about readily apparent results. The difference between these two views is that the empiricists appear to believe that principles governing human behavior are in the events observed and must be found or discovered by the investigator. The rationalists appear to believe that the principles are constructed by the investigator as he or she makes sense of the observed facts in light of known principles, values, beliefs, etc.

The important question, according to Gertenbach, is 'How is man defined, externally through the social and physical context in which he lives, or internally, by his perceptions of the world around him?' Are persons defined or do they define themselves, is their reality constructed for them or do they construct it themselves? Do students learn what they are taught and as a result of teaching (the empiricist or scholarship-oriented view), or do they construct their own knowledge with the guidance and help of teachers (the rationalist or speculation-oriented view)?

From Gertenbach's perspective accountability can be seen in terms of 'who controls education?' Can a student's learning be completely controlled by educators? If it can then teachers may be held accountable for producing a specific kind of learning outcome in learners. This would be the view that Gertenbach ascribes to empiricists. If students construct their own knowledge, their own view of the world, then it is unreasonable to hold teachers accountable for specific learning outcomes. Teachers can not be expected to control students so completely. Teachers may only be held accountable for using the best possible methods to provide the ideas and the environment from which and in which their students will be able to construct a knowledge which will enable them to be useful and fulfilled members of society. This is the view Gertenbach ascribes to those he calls rationalists.

Notice here that these are only two ways of talking about the nature of the world, of talking about the ways in which people may learn. They may be used to frame arguments about accountability. This paper would be very long if it were to include all of the ways in which we could frame such discussion and action. Although there are other ways to conceptualize the question of accountability, these two viewpoints capture the essence of most common debate.

Accountability as Measurement

One major way of thinking and talking about accountability which may be found in educational literature is based on the set of beliefs which has been called scholarship by Whitehead and empiricism by Gertenbach. Persons working from this set of assumptions believe that it is possible to directly control the results of teaching. They therefore find it reasonable to expect educators to account for the clear, exact, and specific performance of concretely defined, observable outcomes by their students. They expect to be able to reliably measure those outcomes. This section of the paper describes in some detail the history and characteristics of this view as they appear in educational literature.

Alkin (1972) suggests that there are three kinds of educational accountability: accountability for meeting the goals of educational programs, for operation of educational programs which is faithful to their design, and for achieving the outcomes which the program is designed to achieve. He assumes that it is possible to discern, describe, measure, and evaluate discrete parts of the educational process. This assumption is basic to the view of accountability which is described in this paper as seeing accountability as 'measurement.' Persons holding this view assume that the worth of an educational program is the sum of the worth of its parts. They also assume that the worth of each of these parts is discernible apart from all other events in the use of the program and in the school and that the worth of each part may be measured.

Persons taking this view of accountability attempt to define carefully each duty and task of teachers and schools. They attempt to base these definitions in expectations which the majority of the society agrees are the purposes of education. Once this is done they design and prescribe the use of curricula which, if teachers use them exactly as they are designed, are believed to be capable of ensuring that these duties and tasks are carried out as efficiently and effectively as possible and that all the projected outcomes of the curricula are met. Techniques for training teachers in the most effective methods by which to accomplish their tasks and meet the goals of the curricula are devised. This is usually done by observing teachers and ascertaining which techniques are used by effective teachers, that is, teachers whose students' performance meet the goals of the programs. Means by which supervisors may ensure that teachers do all of this faithfully and well are also sought after.

Measures by which to ascertain the degree to which students have attained the objectives of the curriculum are devised and used. Observation techniques and standardized tests are examples of means by which the implementation of programs and the results of teaching are monitored. These measures are used to determine the efficiency and the effectiveness of schools and teachers. If schools and teachers use the programs faithfully, practice the methods which have been described as most effective, if students demonstrate mastery of the things which were the goals of the curriculum, then the schools and teachers will be able to show that they have performed their task and carried out their responsibilities well. They will have been 'accountable.' If the teachers' performance, or that of their students, falls below standards perceived acceptable by

the supervisors and the public, teachers and schools are thought of as having failed to be accountable. They must provide an explanation of their failure, justify it, provide plans to remedy it. If they cannot do this successfully, the task will be assigned to someone else.

Interestingly, at this point the word accountable, which we have used as the verb, to account, and as the noun, accountability, now is seen to be used as an adjective. It describes, in this usage, a positive characteristic. It has come to mean that someone or some organization has 'done a good job.' The meaning of the concept 'accountability' has shifted **from being a procedure** which is required of persons or institutions in order that judgment may be made about their performance of a task or responsibility **to being a characteristic** of schools or teachers. When the word 'accountability' undergoes such a change in meaning two persons using it to talk about education to one another may be engaged in a very frustrating and confusing experience, if one is thinking about the procedure and the other about the characteristic.

Nevertheless, whether one uses accountability to mean a procedure or to mean a characteristic, discussions which assume that it is possible to measure the outcomes of schooling and to objectively describe or measure the work of teachers and schools share one fundamental belief. They are certain that teaching can cause learning. The problem, for persons who hold this belief, is to discover the most effective program, the most effective methods, and to see that teachers use them systematically, rigorously and faithfully.

This view of education could be called a 'contract' view of what education is. It is assumed that a contract to provide a specific service has been entered into by schools and teachers with the community and society which they serve.

1. Scientific management; the historical root of the measurement view.

   The measurement view of educational accountability has its beginning in the 'scientific management' movement which arose in North American business philosophy in the early years of the 20th century. This philosophy was enthusiastically adopted and adapted to education by the founder of scientific management, Frederick Taylor, and by his enthusiastic disciples such as Elwood Cubberley and Franklin Bobbitt. The proponents of this movement attempted to apply the principles of careful observation and of systematic organization of labor, which were the basis of Taylor's philosophy, to the work of teachers, the organization of schools and school systems, and the design of educational programs and materials. In business the goal of scientific management was to increase profits. In education the goal was to save money and to increase the amount which the students learned. The watchword was efficiency.

   Wilson (1973, p. 194) describes the result in industry as a triumph of the "'manipulative mind' used to study and direct the activities of men as if they were machines or parts of a machine. Their efforts were believed to be capable of being quantitatively measured and rated. Their overall efficiency was to be improved

through simple mechanical adjustments such as reducing the number of superfluous motions involved in any given action."

This 'cult of efficiency' as Callaghan (1962) called it, came to dominate the thinking of most influential American educators. The assumptions which underlie this view of work are as follows. First, human work may be compared to the work of machines and the actions of workers may be studied and improved in the same way that one would study and improve the productive performance of a machine. Second, it is possible to divide all work into small and precise specializations. Complex work may be thus simplified to be studied, measured, in order to see how to increase efficiency. The worker's performance may be standardized (Wilson, 1973).

Karier (1982, p. 8) argues that the men who adapted scientific management to educational management "profoundly shaped the thinking of the administrative cadre of the public schools in the 20th century." Cremin (1961) described the scientific management era in education as one in which the primary educational problems were considered to be the finding of ways to cope with the dislocations of a society rapidly changing from agrarian to industrial and urban life. Karier believes that the ideas of scientific management found ready acceptance in American schools which already combined a belief in the right of those who were good at what they did to govern all others with the strong respect for property which American society had displayed from its earliest days. The result, he says, was a school system which taught students to read and write and figure, but also taught that the important rewards of life were material goods and that they went to the strongest, and most competitive. Religious and moral values gave way to the values which ensured economic success, Karier says.

Karier also argues that the resulting professionalization of the supervision of education, which earlier had been overseen by religious leaders, disenfranchised the poor. Any influence which the clergy might have brought to bear in favor of their needs and wishes declined. Authority in education shifted from parent to state, Karier argues. "As the system became more bureaucratic, the primary values became standardization and efficiency" (Karier, 1982, pp. 4-6).

Alkin, the program evaluator whose views began this section and who provides a useful later example of the influences of scientific management, said: "Accountability is a negotiated relationship in which the participants agree in advance to accept certain specified rewards and costs on the basis of evaluation findings as to the attainment of specified ends" (Alkin, 1972, p. 2). That is to say education is a contract between educators and the public for the provision of a certain product. Educated persons, defined as persons who can do certain specific things, who understand certain specific principles, who can tell us certain specific facts, and relate those facts to one another and to principles, are the product.

Viewing education as a contract means that the provider of the service is assumed to be in it to make the best of it for him or herself, as the provider of a more material product is in business to make the best possible profit. In business it is assumed that the business person must be constrained by laws and rules from getting carried away by this profit motive and defrauding the public with substandard products.

Enlightened self interest, while talked about in business, and assumed to lead to a good society by philosophies using phrases like the 'invisible hand of the free market' nevertheless also is assumed to require governmental and societal regulation to ensure positive results for most of society. In education, this has often resulted in a distrust of the worker, in this case the teacher. The measurement view of accountability tends to assume that the teacher cannot be trusted to do his or her job well, but must be carefully taught its components and closely supervised to ensure that the performance is exactly in line with the specifications which have been designed to ensure efficiency in education.

By mid-20th century the scientific management version of educational efficiency had lost popularity, but the basic notion, perhaps because it is so simple, perhaps because it fits so well with other aspects of American society, has remained an important part of most Americans, both educators and society in general, beliefs about education.

In other countries such as Great Britain, the idea had little currency until the upheavals in education of the 1960s and 1970s. Britons became concerned to improve education for the poor and the lower classes. This resulted in discussion about the quality of education summarized in then education Minister Callaghan's speech criticizing education and educators in 1976. In it Callaghan called for an increase in the involvement of society in the affairs of schools, and a reduction of the role of teachers in goal setting, curriculum design and evaluation (Becher & Maclure, 1978). Although at this time American notions of education efficiency and American views of accountability as measurement began to be discussed in Britain, they continued to be opposed by the more traditional British views on the subject. These views will be seen in the section of this paper entitled "Accountability as Ethics."

2. The history of more recent attempts to ensure the efficiency of North American schools and teachers.

In North America, in education as in business, scientific management left a strong legacy. Many of its assumptions are so much a part of the fabric of educational systems and thought that they are virtually beyond question. For example, in the 1960s a movement arose to develop curricula so carefully structured that they were virtually 'teacher-proof.'

In the 1970s a wide and determined effort to evaluate the results of these highly structured curricula was mounted. The program evaluators who attempted this task found, to their surprise and dismay, that they often had great difficulty finding the curricula in operation in any way resembling the original plans and in any recognizable form. Fullan (1982), enquiring into this phenomenon, concludes that the complexity of the work which teachers do, and the very structure of schools, makes it impossible to predict and to control the work of teachers as completely as is required for the success of 'teacher-proof' curricula.

Doyle (1983) gives us further insight into questions about whether it is possible to control and structure teachers' work and thus ensure an uniform product. He

describes the day to day work of classroom teachers and students. He talks about a great variety of tasks, activities, decisions which the teacher must devise and orchestrate in any one day. He also describes the routines which teachers and students develop to cope with the complexity of classroom life. Since a routine which works reduces, and makes manageable, the complexity of the job which teachers and students must do daily, it is unlikely that teachers and students would easily submit to external pressures to change that routine. The difficulty which supervisors have in introducing and maintaining change at the classroom level is perhaps explained.

Common (1983) asks "Who should have the power to change schools?" She argues that teachers are, and see themselves, the agents of educational policy. Strategies which try to force curriculum change on teachers from the top down fail, she says, because teachers do not accept the power of those above them in the hierarchy to force them to act. Only when teachers have some role in program development will they successfully implement new programs, she suggests.

If Doyle and Common and others who study schools from their perspective are correct, the assumption that teachers should not be trusted is in direct confrontation with teachers' likelihood as persons (as discussed in the first section) to assume that they have the right to make judgments about their own work, according to their own standards, as responsible adults. This means, at least, that those who hold a measurement-oriented view of accountability must involve teachers, thus trusting them to some extent, in decisions about the success of education and in plans for the improvement of education if they wish to be sure that schools and teachers meet the expectations which these persons have for education. Maclure (1978, pp. 19-20) points out that questions about the content of curricula and about formal accountability are arguments about who will control education and about what political and administrative structures will be used to ensure and organize that control.

The main goal of the curriculum development movement of the 1960s, the program evaluation movement of the 1970s, as well as other educational movements such as competency based teacher education or school and teacher efficiency research and planning, was, and is, to use descriptive research into the activities of schools, teachers, and students to form a knowledge base which might be used to develop programs, procedures, and structures which would enable the agents of society and society itself to control and ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the education offered to individuals. To do this educators and others followed the old scientific management devices of breaking the tasks of teaching and learning into small, observable, measurable parts, determining the most effective practices in each part, devising means by which teachers might learn to do these practices well, devising means by which supervisors might ensure that they do so, and finding ways to measure the results of education as they appeared in the performance by students of specific tasks. Of the numerous further examples of this point which could be detailed, this paper briefly outlines only three: supervision as a means of ensuring effectiveness, teacher education as a means of doing so, and teacher testing to determine the fitness of individual teachers to carry out the tasks of education. In each example it is possible to trace the assumptions of scientific

management. In each example the strengths and the weaknesses of this approach to educational accountability are apparent.

3. Supervision as a means of determining educational accountability.

Principals, and others responsible for the operation of schools and school systems, who accept the assumptions of the measurement oriented view of accountability are faced with the need to develop methods by which they may ensure that their schools, school systems and teachers achieve the student outcomes which have been determined as necessary by the planners of programs and curricula. They must also find ways to ensure that the schools which they manage meet the expectations of a diverse and seldom agreeing society. Sergiovanni and Starratt (1979) provide an excellent description of the methods which they may use and the goals which they pursue. These goals and methods are often strikingly similar to those used and advocated by the followers of Bobbitt.

Throughout this century many persons responsible for the management of education have attempted to devise supervision systems which would enable administrators to ensure that their teachers followed their instructions exactly. Burton (1923) describes supervision as it was early in the century. Caliaghan (1962) documents the passion for objective observation scales and rating devices which was evident from Burton's day to his. Karier (1982, pp. 12-13) brings us up to date by discussing the social engineering techniques, such as sensitivity training and group designs for the learning of a variety of social and work skills, which were used in the 1960s and 1970s to try to ensure the efficiency of workers within a framework of democratic social values. Karier is concerned that whatever their primary purpose, these techniques seem to have had the effect of increasing the bureaucratization of education by focusing on the technology of teaching and ignoring the role of teachers as determiners of educational goals. This function was not returned to the hands of parents or community by these developments, but placed higher and higher within the educational hierarchy, he believes. Smyth (1986, p. 157) seems to agree. He outlines the history of 'clinical supervision.' This was an attempt to "free supervision from its watchdog origins." He describes it as a "systematic, data-based way of teachers working with other teachers that dispensed with judgmental preconceptions and emphasized personal empowerment." This is a goal well within the belief system of the measurement orientation. It is different from many other measurement oriented initiatives only in its attempt to put the control of the systematic observation and evaluation of teaching in the hands of teachers themselves. The watchdog function proved very difficult to remove. Clinical supervision often became "an instrumental form of fine-tuning teaching so teachers became better at doing more of the same, . . . pushing a conservative line that effectively forces teachers to think about the means of teaching" to the exclusion of thought about the content and goals of teaching.

In Saskatchewan supervisors have tried to play two roles and found the attempt very difficult, according to Wright and Renihan (1985), Sackney (1980) and Johnston (1983). Supervisors have tried to evaluate the performance of their teachers and to help them to become better teachers. Both principals and teachers seem to believe that both are legitimate tasks for supervisors to attempt to perform.

However, teachers are liable to emphasize the helping task and principals the evaluative one. Everyone agrees that the tasks are very difficult to perform. Helping requires trust and evaluation tends to erode it. While Wright and Renihan identify other barriers to effective supervision, in all three papers the conflict of roles receives much attention. It seems that there is a serious contradiction involved in combining attempts to ensure that teachers produce a specific product in a specific way and attempts to help teachers to construct personal professional competence.

4. Teacher education.

Peck and Tucker (1973, p. 970) express the continuing desire for systematic understanding and control of teaching which arose from their extensive literature review: "Teacher education seems likely to become a far more systematic process in the years ahead. Its objectives seem likely to be stated in terms of concrete, observable, and trainable teaching behaviors." In the years following the Peck and Tucker review many teacher educators tried very hard to develop programs which would do just that. Competency based teacher education was the most specific in its attempt, but the many other attempts to base teacher education on teacher effectiveness and school effectiveness research that began in the 1970s and continue today bear witness to the continuing strength of the demand which Peck and Tucker articulated. That the hope is constantly disappointed is also clear from the titles of articles such as Morin (1986) which indicate recognition of the apparent fact that teachers are no easier to standardize, observe and measure than are students in public schools and that teachers cannot be programmed to follow specific programs. Haberman (1982, p. 76) believes that we simply do not know enough yet about teaching to enable us to effectively teach people to be teachers. He still has hope that the old dream will be reached. Oberg (1986) and Clandinin (1983) are examples of teacher educators who have abandoned the dream and look for different ways to educate teachers, ways which acknowledge the capacity of persons to formulate their own goals and evaluate their own performance in terms of standards based in their own systems of beliefs and values. They agree with Langford (1985) as his views were represented in the first section of this paper. People are different from institutions. They frustrate all attempts to measure their performance. There is too much going on that is not open to objective description.

5. Teacher testing.

Teacher testing, a hot topic in American education in the last five years, provides a final example of measurement views of accountability. Many respected educators are presently searching for tests which will fairly measure the fitness of teachers to teach. It is reasonable to wish to examine and to determine the fitness of an educator to do his or her job. Many American states have made teacher testing mandatory. Nevertheless the literature on teacher testing, while it contains many plans for accomplishing the objective evaluation of a teacher's fitness, also contains many criticisms of all present attempts. Darling-Hammond (1986, p. 46) says that all of the teacher tests which she has examined have serious flaws. They seem unable to formulate any but the most trivial questions in formats which can be reliably measured. Madaus and Pullin (1987) describe teacher tests as being of two kinds. There are those which attempt to measure a teacher's knowledge in a

specific content area, and those which attempt to measure a teacher's knowledge of a body of knowledge which the test makers believe all teachers should know. While Madaus and Pullin believe, like Shulman (1987b) that it is possible to develop and use tests which will fairly measure fitness to teach, they say that the makers of present tests which set out to measure general teaching knowledge have failed to define a body of knowledge common to all teachers and failed to develop test items which would reliably test such knowledge. They say that teacher tests are often narrow and not always related to the curricula which the teachers will be required to teach. Medley (1984) agrees. He says that there are no scores on subject matter tests which can be shown to relate significantly to teacher competence. Although we can test academic knowledge accurately, he believes, we cannot use the technology of testing to provide anything other than weak indicators of professional competence.

Shulman (1987b) takes another approach to the question. In trying to determine how it is that a teacher must know something, he argues that a good teacher will and must know content knowledge differently than someone who has learned the same knowledge for some other purpose. The teacher's knowledge is formed by the necessity to also know how persons seem likely to best learn the knowledge in question and also to know how the learning of students may best be facilitated, structured, or encouraged. The knowledge of the teacher is likely to be different from that possessed by another kind of professional or a liberal arts student. Before it is possible to determine ways to describe or to measure the knowledge of the teacher, Shulman contends, it is necessary to understand what kind of thing that knowledge may be.

6. The problem of values.

Persons who, in this part of the 20th century, hold assumptions about education and accountability which may be described as having a measurement orientation attempt to analyze the tasks which a teacher or a school must perform, determine their component parts, and devise research which will enable them to find out how effective schools and teachers perform these tasks. They use the results of this research to specify appropriate student outcomes, and design the best methods and programs they can in order to make it possible for students and teachers to reach these goals. They plan for supervision, teacher education, and teacher testing which will enable them to ensure that teachers are capable of implementing the programs using the most effective methods.

Educators are required to provide accounts of their methods, and of the results obtained by their students. These are compared to the outcomes and methods prescribed by the programs. Any failure to achieve these predetermined standards must be explained and remedied. As is clear, this is the way a contract is managed in law and in business.

The contract view of educational accountability seems most seriously inadequate when faced by the problems created by the diverse expectations, values and beliefs brought to discussion and action by all of those involved with education: parents, teachers, students and society in general. The commercial contract, as a metaphor

for the agreement which teachers have with the society they serve, is based on some assumptions which have proved troublesome. Mainly the problem is that there are at least three types of persons who are part of any 'contract' to provide education. There are the adults contracting for the service, the educators who provide the service, and the students who use the service. In modern, industrial, urban, multicultural societies each of these 'parties' to the contract may reflect a vast diversity of views and expectations in terms of economic status, class, race, occupation, religion, and world view. Consensus about the goals of schooling is next to impossible to attain it seems. If consensus cannot be determined then we do not know for what we are holding teachers and schools accountable. We do not know what standards to use when evaluating their performance. If we take a measurement view of accountability we assume such consensus. "The output of the system, the learned student, reflects the expectations of various publics. If these expectations are not met, the system is modified until it does [sic]" (Barbee & Bouck, 1974, p. 4). Broudy (1965, p. 50) said that the educator works with "human beings who are clusters and constellations of value potentials." He makes the point that if this is so then anything which is human is a reasonable goal of education. There is no room for this consideration in the measurement orientation to accountability. Recently, many program evaluators have demonstrated this lack of room. Popham (1981) summed it up well when he pointed out how much easier it was to evaluate a student's skill in arithmetic computations than it was to evaluate the student's ability to respond with both heart and mind to aesthetic experiences. Stake provides a particularly vivid example in his own career. He began as the developer of a much used and highly rated systematic model for the objective description and evaluation of educational programs. Now he says that an evaluator may only tell a story, tell it from his or her own perspective, trying as faithfully as possible to help the readers of his or her report to understand the implementation of the program as vividly and in as many of its aspects as is possible. They must use the story, not to tell them how well the program has been implemented but to help them make their own judgments of its worth. Evaluation of education, many professional evaluators seem to be saying now, is judgment, and judgment is a matter of applying one's value system to as accurate and evocative a description of the work of a teacher or a school as it is possible to obtain. The judging cannot be made simpler or more reliable by any technique of measurement or research yet devised.

Summary of the Measurement View of Accountability

The dominant set of beliefs in American education in the 20th century is based upon the assumption that the work of educators and of educational institutions consists of a series of discrete tasks, which if properly carried out, will result in observable, measurable changes in or additions to the knowledge of students. Persons holding this set of beliefs also assume that it is possible to measure these changes or additions objectively. That is to say, if several evaluators separately but carefully followed the same methods when gathering and analyzing information about the performance of students, teachers, and schools, each would reach similar conclusions about the success or failure of those students, teachers, and schools in the tasks which they were required to perform. Persons holding this set of beliefs discount any influence of individual values and perceptions on the judgment of those to whom educators are accountable. They discount, too, the ef-

fect of individual values and perceptions on the production of accounts by those to whom such tasks are assigned, whether they are persons external to the institution or persons within the educational system which is being required to produce an account and explanation of its performance.

Accountability, for persons holding these assumptions, is a matter of showing that you have done what you were required to do in the most efficient and effective way, or of explaining what prevented you from doing so, and stating what you plan to do to overcome the difficulty.

The problem which faces persons holding these views is the need to be sure that the methods and programs used by teachers are capable of causing the results they are intended to cause. If results are to be measured, standards must be accurate and reliable, means must be proven to be capable of leading to the results ascribed to them. Causation, or the possibility of causation given effective performance of educational tasks, must be clearly and evidentially established if teachers or schools are to be judged, within this framework, to have done their jobs well or badly. As we have seen, in education this has proven to be very difficult.

Accountability as Ethics

What practical alternative is there to viewing accountability as measurement? Langford (1985, p. 102) makes the point that persons can only be held accountable for some action if we believe them to be capable and likely to perform it well. Sometimes people do not live up to this belief, but generally it is a reasonable one. Langford believes that talk about accountability recognizes the possibility that a person may not live up to our expectations, that he or she will not fulfill our trust, or that he or she will not do a task to the best of his or her ability. Requiring an account from someone is characterized by Langford as an attempt to minimize the risk, and the potential damage, of a breach of our trust.

Trust and responsibility are concepts which are central to the belief system of those who believe that accountability is an ethical matter. Central to this view is the assumption that persons are capable of judging their own performance, of rendering accounts to themselves as well as to others, and of working toward the perfection of their performance without outside coercion. If this is so there can be no accountability without trust. We trust someone to do a job well. If we did not we would not delegate the responsibility for it to him or her. We allow that person to use resources which we entrust to him or her for the accomplishing of the task in as satisfactory a manner as can be reasonably expected. A basic belief here is that if a person is to be held accountable for the performance of a task, that person must be truly capable of its successful completion. That is, the person must have both the opportunity and the capacity to do it. When we say that a person is responsible for something we mean that we expect him or her to act in certain ways, in certain kinds of situations, and that we have a right to ask for explanations of, and perhaps retribution for, any actions which do not contribute to the successful accomplishment of the goal. If a person does not have the freedom of action which

is the result of trust, that person cannot be said to be truly responsible for his or her acts and therefore cannot be held accountable for the quality of his or her performance, the results of the acts, or the non-performance of the task.

1. Responsibility.

Responsibility is itself a very diverse and difficult concept. Elliston (1987) says that there are both descriptive and normative aspects of accountability. The descriptive aspect enables us to see who is expected to do what. The normative aspect enables us to determine whom to hold accountable for failure or non-performance. It is possible for someone to be responsible and accountable for some task which is performed by another person. A military officer is responsible for and can be held accountable for the quality of the repair of an aircraft engine which is carried out by persons under his or her command. So we see we can only hold someone accountable if he or she is truly responsible. A teacher who does not have the responsibility for making choices between programs or methods cannot be held accountable for the failure or success of the programs or methods he or she uses.

Lowrance (1986, p. 73) points out that the term 'responsibility' has a wide variety of uses. It may mean that someone's action caused a certain result, that someone has a duty to perform, that a person may be relied upon to do what he or she promises, or to do his or her duty. It may mean that someone is capable of being motivated to do something, that someone holds a certain official duty and is capable of carrying it out, that someone is an ethical person, or that someone is liable to be held accountable. Translated into educational terms these definitions of responsibility lead to the following. We have seen that it is important to be clear about what educators are able to cause to happen. Are they able to cause students to learn? That is, can they ensure that a student will acquire a specific fact or skill or understanding as a result of a specific action on the part of the teacher? Perhaps they can only be sure that they can provide an environment in which a student has a good chance of learning. What is the authorized duty of educators? Are they to ensure specific educational results such as the acquisition of certain skills or are they to help students to develop in unique, personal, social and intellectual ways? How are teachers to be reliable? Would reliable teachers always know about and use the programs most likely to help all, or some, of their students to learn? What about motivation? What does that mean for teachers in schools? For what are they capable of being psychologically responsible or motivated? What happens when teachers burn out? Does that mean that they are no longer capable of motivation for effective performance and therefore cannot be held accountable for poor performance? What are the ethics which guide the performance of a 'responsible' teacher? Do we mean when we say that educators are responsible, that is accountable, in Lowrance's final use of the term responsible, that they are capable of producing and explaining accounts of their behavior as educators? Does it mean, on the other hand, that they are 'responsible' for producing specific results? When thinking about educational accountability using the second orientation, the orientation which sees accountability as involving ethical considerations, all of these questions arise and must be thought about.

When we hold someone accountable we are using what Elliston (1987) called the normative aspect of responsibility. Persons who hold the set of beliefs called, in this paper, the ethical view of accountability believe that it is impossible to hold someone accountable for certain actions unless we know that he or she is responsible for the actions in an ethical or moral sense. How are we to determine whether or not he or she is responsible in this sense? First, we must assume that a capacity for accountability and responsibility is an attribute of all adults. All adults are capable of reason, of understanding the ethical codes of their society and acting in accordance with them. Second, we must recognize that when discussing normative matters, such as accountability, which are about values and beliefs, and therefore cannot be proven or objectively determined, only rational means of investigation are useful. So, to determine whether or not individuals are responsible for something in the sense which we are calling ethical, we must determine whether or not they are capable of reason, and of understanding the ethical codes of their society. We can only do this by observing them, perhaps talking to them, and using rational thought to make a judgment of their capacity for ethical or moral responsibility based upon what evidence we have of their capacities and our general understanding of the behavior and conversation of responsible adults. A basic assumption of this orientation to accountability is thus displayed. We can only reason about ethics, we cannot come to any complete and indisputable description of them.

2. The general pattern of discussions about accountability which proceed from an ethical orientation.

Arguments about accountability usually proceed as follows. Someone who is responsible for getting something done may allocate some of his or her resources to someone else on the condition that this second person uses the resources to ensure that the task is accomplished. The second person is now responsible to the first person for the successful completion of the task. This second person may be asked to render an account of his or her use of the resources to the first person. The second person may also be asked to explain both the use of the resources and the nature of the result of what was done. An early example of this logic is found in the story of the faithful servant and the servant who showed initiative in the use of the talents entrusted to them by their master in the Bible.

This process may be complicated when the task to be accomplished is broad, ill-defined, value-laden and as lacking in specificity as we have seen many educational tasks are. In education it is often unclear what the tasks being required of educators are. How can we be sure to whom and for what we are holding someone accountable in cases where we are not even sure what is intended or should be intended in that case? A second complicating factor is apparent when we realize that those responsible and accountable for the performance of some educational task may, in other life roles, be among those who assigned the task in the first place. The educator is also a citizen and often a parent. The citizen-parent-educator quite rightly believes him or herself to be free to determine, at least to some extent, both the nature of the educational task, and the appropriate amount and use of the resources to be allocated to its accomplishment. The

educator is thus accountable to him or herself as well as to others for the proper conduct of the tasks which society has delegated to teachers.

How can we include all of these elements in any workable view of accountability?

Ethical and Social Responsibility in Business Literature

Since in the measurement section it was clear that views from business and industry had strongly influenced educational views of accountability, it may be useful to see what philosophers and others who write about business issues have to say about the ethical orientation toward accountability. In the *Ethics for Executives* series published by *The Harvard Business Review*, Carr (1968, pp. 127-129) likened business to a poker game. He suggested that bluffing was as acceptable a strategy in business as it was in poker and could not really be called lying nor be thought to indicate a lack of morality. Still comparing business to poker, he said that the game requires that one distrust others and try to deceive them. "And no one should think any the worse of the game of business because its standards of right and wrong differ from the prevailing traditions of morality in our society." The letters to the editor following this article violently disagreed with the point of view being expressed.

A more seriously considered point of view is often called the loyal agent argument.

1. The loyal agent argument.

   This view was espoused by Milton Friedman in his influential article "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits." He argues that in a free enterprise system the employee is obligated only to follow the dictates of his or her employer. He argues that if the employees of a corporation spend corporate resources, including the time of the employees themselves, on social objectives, this amounts to a tax on the owners of the corporation. Unless those owners have agreed to the imposition of such a tax, or the actions of the employees have been authorized by government in its role as the representative of all the people, such a tax is illegal. This argument is a 20th century version of John Locke's argument that no social obligations may be held to be the responsibility of a group. Only individuals have social or moral obligations (Friedman, 1970, as in Poff & Waluchow, 1987, p. 11). So, any social, moral or ethical obligations required of an individual are required of him or her only when acting as an independent citizen, outside of the hours which are spent working for the corporation. When working the employee is accountable only for acting in accordance with the wishes and directives of his or her employers.

   Michalos is representative of those who disagree with this argument. He describes the difference between moral and social responsibilities. Social responsibilities include the necessity to display good manners. They make social life both possible and pleasant. Moral responsibilities are all of those actions which are "intended to maximize human well being" (Michalos, 1987, p. 13). Michalos rejects what he calls the particular moralities of Carr and Friedman. "There can only be one kind of

morality and it is universal. Business people, like everyone else, must be judged morally responsible or irresponsible in terms of this morality" (Michalos, 1987, p. 25).

Brunk (1987, p. 64) is concerned with another aspect of the debate about what may be the proper way for a professional worker to view his role. He believes that in today's technological society it has become very easy for professionals to be aware of and do only their small part of some much larger enterprise and to ignore the ethical implications of the enterprise as a whole. He says that there are two sets of beliefs about professional ethics which professionals may have. The first holds that the professional must do his or her job well and leave decisions about the ethical and moral implications of the enterprise to his or her employers and to the political leaders of the society. The values of the employer are the values which control the action of the professional. This is the professional version of the loyal agent's argument. Brunk (1987) is concerned about what he calls an 'ethical isolationism' which he believes has developed in the 20th century. Persons who adopt this ethical isolationism see the practice of a profession as the efficient exercise of technical skills to provide a certain product. The prime value is 'objectivity,' "... normative judgments of any kind are subjective matters of opinion, and ... it is an abuse of one's role to put them forward as 'professional' opinions."

The second set of beliefs, and the set which Brunk (1987) believes should be held by all professionals, places moral responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the professional. The public and the agents of the public should, Brunk says, hold professionals responsible and accountable, not for following programs or rules explicitly, nor for doing exactly as their employers require, but for always acting in ways which maximize benefit and minimize harm to all. This view of professional accountability requires that professionals make judgments about the worth of the methods they are able to use, and of the potential effects of those methods on those who live in the communities and the society which is served by the professional.

The most difficult problem inherent in this view is that the interpretation of benefit and harm is seldom easy. The issues involved are rarely clear cut. To hold professionals responsible in Brunk's second way requires that they be trusted to act morally and that they be held accountable only for failure to do so. A loyal agent is held accountable for a specific pattern of behavior or a specific product. A morally responsible professional is held accountable for choosing to act in ways which have the best chance of causing as little harm and as much good to as many persons as is humanly possible.

Teachers: Loyal Agents or Responsible Professionals?

How does this relate to educational accountability? Questions about the relationship between the responsibility of teachers and others employed in educational institutions for acting in accordance with the wishes of school boards and the public, and about educators' responsibilities as moral adult members of a profession and of the community are central to discussions of educational accountability. Should educators be the loyal

agents of school boards, governments, and the public? If so, what happens when the wishes of different groups in the community contradict one another or are in disagreement with the wishes of school boards or government departments? Should the teacher or principal or director of education take a role in the setting of educational goals? Are educators to be held accountable only for meeting the goals of the board or the public? Should educators hold themselves, and be held, accountable first to some higher moral principle as outlined by Michalos (1987)? If an educator believes that some educational policy is harmful to a group of children, or to an individual child, should that educator carry out the policy, change it to meet the needs of the child or children, or attempt to get the school board to change the policy or practice?

What is an educator? A loyal agent, or someone responsible for acting according to certain basic moral principles?

Maclure (1978, p. 21) is concerned about this question. He wonders about the relationship which should exist between professional teachers and the parents of their students at the level of the local school. He wonders if there are any procedures or rules which could and should be devised to regulate what he calls 'the relationship of trust' which exists between parents and teachers. He notes the complexity of the question and of the relationship that exists between parents and teachers. Participation in the relationship may, on the part of the parent, range from ensuring that the child comes to school to working in the classroom as a parent volunteer. At the local level parents ask for and get accounts of their work from teachers in many ways, from informal social contacts to formal reporting and accountability procedures. Maclure warns that attempts to apply simple rules in each and every instance of the relationship between a parent and a teacher will certainly cause more harm than good.

Grant (1988) says that the purpose of the accountability relationship between parents or community and teachers is to ensure that certain goals are pursued, not to provide detailed direction on what to do and how to do it. If he is right then the teacher must be trusted to make choices and to act on them. The situations in which teachers make these choices often require a sophisticated understanding of many factors and of the relationship between them if the teacher is to fulfill the expectations of all of those involved in the educational relationship. Grant is describing a situation in which the parents expect the teacher to act as a morally responsible professional.

The problem for Maclure and Grant, and all who believe that teachers should be morally responsible professionals, is that (identified earlier in this paper) of the variety and complexity of goals for and expectations of education which are found in today's society. How is the teacher to make choices which are fair and of maximum benefit to all of his or her students when their needs and desires are so varied? Unless we can find some way for the professional to cope with this complexity, little can be done to clarify many difficult issues surrounding educational accountability.

Taylor (1978, p. 55) suggests that a workable notion of accountability must include systematic self-monitoring by individuals and institutions of their own choices and their action as they continue to work with learners. Such self-monitoring might include regular

curriculum reviews, program evaluations, public discussion of goals and objectives and "a more considered attempt . . . to bring existing and new research efforts to bear upon the relationships between schooling and other social processes."

The obvious conclusion which springs from following the arguments of Brunk, Maclure, Grant and Taylor is that educators must learn to observe themselves, to ask hard questions of themselves about the morality as well as the effectiveness of what they do, and to make necessary changes in their practice as educators if those changes are required to make their practice come closer to the ideal of maximizing benefit and minimizing harm to all who are involved in education. Teachers who choose to view themselves in this way would repudiate the loyal agent's argument. They would be acting as morally responsible professionals.

This is not likely to be easy for teachers to do. There are many factors in the professional life of teachers which make it difficult for them to see themselves as morally responsible persons and which make the path of the loyal agent's argument an attractive one for many teachers.

Gibson (1980) reminds us that teachers are employees. They have signed a contract. Such contracts seldom define effective performance for teachers. Legislation is rarely more helpful to the teacher who is trying to decide what he or she should be held, and hold him or herself, accountable for. Teachers' work is ill-defined and complex, as the research of Jackson (1969), Sarason (1975), Elbaz (1983) and others has shown us.

The relationships between teachers and others in the educational enterprise are also very complex. Court (in progress) has extensively reviewed research on teachers as workers and on teachers' knowledge. She concludes that teachers are very isolated as workers. Relationships between teachers and their peers are often held to the level of coffee discussion in the staff room. Relationships between teachers and their supervisors vary greatly as well, from the very collegial to the very authoritarian (Bridges, 1980).

The preservice and inservice education of individual teachers is not likely to have even broad similarity within, let alone across teacher education institutions. Frequently, teachers learn the beliefs and attitudes of their profession through socialization, rather than through careful thought and reflection as a part of their professional education. Gibson (1980) points out that teachers often feel most accountable to their peers, and then to their individual students. He says that they seldom appear concerned with the broadly defined goals of education. Bridges (1980, p. 71) believes that most teachers must have a better understanding of the social and political nature of education before they can resolve questions of choice: between acting as loyal agents or being what we have called, in this paper, morally responsible professionals.

These writers have painted a picture of teachers as working and learning to work in situations which make the choice to act as a morally responsible professional a very difficult one to make. Each teacher must make the choice and make it in circumstances of considerable complexity and ambiguity. However, if we accept that a teacher is an adult

person, we say that the teacher is capable of making that choice, and making it according to his or her beliefs about what is right, wrong, effective, or ineffective. If this is true, then the teacher alone controls the choice. The teacher alone can decide to be a loyal agent or to be a morally responsible professional. Society as a whole can make the choosing difficult or confusing but only the professional teacher can make the choice. It follows that if teachers are to be controlled by others it will be because they decide to be controlled. If they choose not to be controlled, no system of curriculum development or of supervision, no matter how sophisticated, will serve to control them. If this is so, it seems a waste of time to continue to invent coercive systems of ensuring that teachers act in certain ways, that is to say, it seems a waste of time to continue to try to enforce measurement oriented views of accountability.

What can or should communities and educators alike do to minimize that risk that teachers might act irresponsibility that Langford said, at the beginning of this section, was the reason for concern about accountability? What would teachers be like, how would we expect them to act, if we adopted an ethical view of accountability in the governance of education?

The Autonomous Teacher

If we adopt what we have been calling an ethical perspective on accountability, what do we expect a teacher to be like, how do we expect him or her to act?

Bailey (1980, p. 99), as a result of an extensive literature review, describes what he calls an 'autonomous teacher.' He reminds us that there is a long tradition in the history of Western societies of a view of 'moral and responsible' accountability which is different from the presently dominant measurement oriented perspectives. "This is the tradition, associated more with morality than with legality, of personal accountability and responsibility where the accountability is to oneself rather than to others." The autonomous teacher described by Bailey comes from this tradition. The autonomous teacher makes judgments according to certain criteria which he or she has adopted rationally, that is to say has thought about carefully and decided to adopt because they seem most likely, on the basis of available evidence, to be true. He or she is concerned with the needs and desires of others. Although the autonomous teacher will often concur in other's decisions he or she will never do so without careful thought. Bailey says that there are two ways to be autonomous. "There is autonomy of reason, that is the capacity to think things through rationally and clearly, and the autonomy which is the result of being responsible for, and accountable to, one's own reasons and reasoning" (Bailey, 1980, p. 104). The autonomous teacher is autonomous in both senses. This teacher cannot simply accept the word of some 'moral expert' as to what right or wrong professional practice might be. In fact, Bailey says, to ask a teacher to assume the responsibility of teaching is to ask that teacher to be autonomous. The teacher can choose to be more or less autonomous. "The more his own reflection can determine what he teaches, how he teaches it, how he behaves toward his pupils and expects them to behave towards one another and to him, the more autonomous he is" (Bailey, 1980, p. 104).

Why should we encourage teachers to behave autonomously? One's answer to this question depends on what one believes education to be. If education is the means by which persons are enabled to develop as broad and as complex an understanding of human experience as is possible, rather than the means by which persons become competent in certain specific skills and content only, then an autonomous teacher is a necessity. Education which develops as full an understanding of human experience as is possible is education which develops autonomous persons. To suggest that teachers who are not autonomous persons could help their students to become autonomous persons is absurd.

The most likely objection to this argument expresses the reasonable concern about a teacher who might make unacceptable choices. For example, what about a teacher who teaches that the Holocaust did not happen and that the policies of the Nazis are good ways to run a society? Bailey (1980) says that the only way to deal with this problem is provide the kind of teacher education and the kind of educational supervision and management which will help teachers to develop the judgment needed to avoid such errors. To teach, a teacher must make decisions. To instruct at all, a teacher must have the judgment to use well whatever skill or knowledge he or she possesses. If the teacher is to have the judgment to do this, to have the judgment to avoid the terrible errors, teacher education and supervision must ensure that even though a teacher is hired to teach certain specific things, he or she is capable of doing so in such a way as to contribute consciously and well to the overall goals of the school and of the community. To do this the teacher must be trusted with a share of the responsibility for those goals. Responsibility requires autonomy. Teacher educators and supervisors must accept the duty of ensuring that all of those who receive the license to teach are capable of autonomy and of making rational, defensible ethical and moral choices. "The teacher should therefore be autonomous and accountability should be such as not to infringe this autonomy." Bailey says that this will not lead to anarchy because it depends on rationality, on teachers who are knowledgeable, and on teachers who feel an obligation to their pupils and employers, teachers who do not feel constrained by dependence on those pupils and employers. Such teachers have the right to participate in the formation as well as the collective implementation of policy as independent professionals (Bailey, 1980, p. 107). An autonomous teacher would not act arbitrarily in ways contrary to properly established educational policies. However, neither would such a teacher feel constrained to obey such policies in all cases. Acceptable policies require justification and the consent of all parties involved. The autonomous educator reserves the right to consider carefully, to choose not to act, even to choose to oppose a policy which did not survive careful, rational scrutiny. Such decisions are influenced by the autonomous professional's view of the consequences to students, the educational system and to the educator, of such policies and of decisions to oppose or ignore such policies (Rawls, 1971; Bailey, 1980). Bailey sums up this viewpoint: "the autonomous individual is not necessarily opposed to authority and the rule of law, what he is opposed to is arbitrariness and unreasonableness" (Bailey, 1980, p. 102).

Greene (1973, p. 14) summarizes the view of those who hold a set of beliefs which emphasize reason and ethics in questions of accountability.

> I want to do what I can to liberate persons for cognitive quests and creative fulfillments. There does not seem to be any way of doing that if we follow the road of the management experts. A humane pluralism cannot be created by highly skilled automata; a free society cannot endure if persons cannot choose themselves--if they are not allowed to. . . . We do not need prior assurances where personal growing is concerned; we do not need rigid frames. Let us break through the abstractions and the machine-like structures. Let us risk life without guarantees.

Summary

If accountability is viewed from what we are calling, in this paper, an ethical viewpoint, the teacher must be trusted to act appropriately, that is according to the dictates of reason. If he or she does not, that is what must be accounted for, not failure to faithfully implement a program or failure to produce a specific product, or a specific condition in a learner, nor to ensure a specific result. Teachers who hold an ethical view of accountability will not consider themselves loyal agents of the school board, or of the principal, or even of society as a whole. They will hold themselves accountable for reasonable behavior which maximizes benefit to all of those whose education is in their hands. As Sockett (1976) reminds us, in order to be considered accountable, a person must be able to, and is obliged to, justify his or her actions to all of those who have a right to call for such an account. The ethical view of accountability considers teachers themselves to be foremost among those who have a right to demand that teachers account for their actions and the results of their actions.

Bertrand Russell (1960, p. 391) said of the responsibilities of professionals: "The scientist is also a citizen; and citizens who have any special skill have a public duty to see, as far as they can, that their skill is utilized in accordance with the public interest." His statement denies the possibility that a professional can refuse to be concerned about the use which is made of his or her knowledge.

An ethical view of accountability asserts that educators are responsible persons. They must be trusted to do their jobs well and to see that newcomers to their profession are equipped to do so as well. They are accountable for being knowledgeable and for using their knowledge in the most useful ways presently known. They are accountable for practices which will enable their students to become competent, knowledgeable persons as well. Education is seen, not as a commercial enterprise producing a standard product, but as an infinitely variable realm of content, skill, and decision making, within which the professional educator works to maximize benefit to his or her students by ensuring that they understand human experience as completely as they are able. Teachers are competent, autonomous professionals who are accountable to themselves, their students, their colleagues, and to society for the proper conduct of their professional duties.

WHAT ABOUT QUESTIONS OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF SCHOOLS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS?

Because much of this paper has talked of accountability as if it were primarily a matter concerned with teachers, it seems necessary now to concentrate briefly on the meaning of accountability as applied to schools and to other educational institutions. The two views of accountability which have framed this paper are also applicable here.

Most of the talk about accountability in relation to schools, in recent years at least, has concerned itself with discussion about ways and means to ensure effective schools and to reform schools which are perceived to be providing inferior or inappropriate education. Most of this talk springs, in North America at least, from that set of assumptions and beliefs which we have called the measurement view of accountability.

Altbach (1982) reviews current discussion and debate concerning effective schools and the need to reform schools. He suggests that the reason so many people believe that American schools need to be reformed is that the Americans have always believed that first, since everyone has been to school, everyone is an expert on education, and second, that schools can provide solutions to all of the problems besetting American society. Kelly and Seller (1985) studied the history of reform movements in New York state. Their case study provides an excellent example of these two American beliefs about schools. They describe successive waves of attempts at reform, beginning in 1911, leading to government-appointed commission after commission, which have resulted in little concrete and lasting change in American schools. They suggest that all educational reform is filled with contradictions because all reform movements have many different sources and supporters. They show that calls for educational reform have been ways in which the people of New York state responded to discontent about everything from racial and economic problems to concern with the Cold War.

This puts a different light on discussions about the accountability of schools. If it is true that there are so many factors influencing the expectations which Americans have for their schools, influencing the perspectives which they have on the effectiveness of their schools, perhaps demanding that a school present an account of itself is as difficult and complex a matter as we have seen it to be to demand that a teacher present an account of his or her actions and their results.

What are the ways in which we have tried to ensure that schools are accountable? What systems and means of accounting for themselves have we recommended to or imposed upon schools? This section of the paper briefly describes the school effectiveness movement, and external evaluation, school based evaluation and action research as views of the way to determine whether or not schools are doing a good job.

School Effectiveness

This part of the present wave of attempts to reform schools in the United States assumes that research which describes the work of effective schools may serve as the basis for the development of systems and methods which may be used to help all American schools become more effective. Hosford (1984), in a publication of the American Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, provides a good example of recent literature of this type. Hosford argues that most teachers are effective, and that superior teachers have a sound knowledge of their subject, of principles of human learning, of important concepts of human growth, of planning, of curriculum development, of diagnosis, and of evaluation. He believes that teacher education can produce such teachers. To ensure that they have an effective school, administrators must find out what effective teachers know and can do, then be sure that all of the teachers in that school know, can do and actually practice the things that we have learned are effective. All teachers in a school must be made aware of effective practice, supervisors must ensure that they use it, and means of measuring their success must be devised and used. An effective school is one in which such things are done and result in increased learning of the specific goals which have been agreed upon in that educational system. An effective school is one in which persons rely as little as is possible on teacher and administrative judgment. They rely upon programs and methods which have proven sound under objective investigation. Hosford is interested in effectiveness, not in value questions. He believes that schools should be held primarily accountable for results, rather than for ethical and moral practice.

Not everyone is so sure of the usefulness of school effectiveness research. Madaus, Airasian and Kellaghan (1980, pp. 188-189) conclude that much of the research on school effectiveness has serious methodological and conceptual problems. While they agree that what happens in schools has an effect on what students achieve, they also believe that we are still largely ignorant of what is happening in schools. They are convinced that more complete knowledge about the social and political context of schools, about the experience of students and teachers in them, is needed before we can build plans for effective schools based on research.

Willower (1986, p. 51) warns that educational administrators must beware of trendy methods and fads in educational research. He says that Americans see schools as secular churches, and quotes Waller (1965) who called them 'museums of virtue.' Willower points out that when we view schools as the guardians of all we value, and try to hold them accountable for acting in that way, we set schools up for inevitable failure. The infinite variety of hopes, values, and expectations which we have seen that modern society places on education guarantees that.

Can we determine whether or not a school is effective? Is it possible to hold a school accountable apart from the accountability of its teachers? There have been several attempts to do so.

1. External evaluation.

One attempt, which we have already discussed in the measurement portion of this paper, involved the use of external evaluators who would come in and measure the performance of the teachers and students in a school against the objectives which the designers of the programs used in the school stated as the proper outcomes of learning. If the students could demonstrate that they had learned these things, the school was considered effective. It had rendered an acceptable account of its task. This attempt to measure the performance of schools, by measuring the performance of the pupils and teachers in the school, is clearly based in the assumptions which we have seen to be basic to the measurement orientation toward accountability. House (1986, p. 6), a determined opponent of these beliefs, calls external evaluation "the industrialization of education" and says that it is the result of the American "mania for technology."

2. School based evaluation.

In Britain educational accountability has been, and is still, generally considered to be the domain of individual schools and of the local educational authorities who govern them (Clift, 1987). McCormick (1982, pp. 26-35) includes three recommendations for successful school based evaluation which were the result of a research project called the Essex Accountability Project. These persons suggest that it must be remembered that accountability is a positive as well as a negative concept. First, accountability procedures can provide freedom from constraints to academic freedom and legitimate rights and powers. These procedures, if followed, ensure that the community is well informed about the school. Malicious gossip and misinformation cannot become widely believed. Second, they believe that accountability is a two way process. In order to ensure effective schools the local educational authority must provide adequate resources and maintain effective support for the school. Finally, accountability is best seen as a process of 'mutual negotiation' where schools, local authorities, and communities work toward consensus about the purpose and means of education.

Clearly school based evaluation proceeds from very different assumptions than does external evaluation. The Essex Accountability Project suggested that there are three kinds of accountability which must be part of any school based system. These are: answerability to parents, responsibility to self and peers, and strict financial and curricular accountability to the local educational authority. This seems like a good working compromise between the demands for responsible use of resources and faithful following of programs which we saw were part of the measurement view of accountability and the logical necessity for teachers to be autonomous and accountable to themselves and to the values and expectations of their communities and students which are the basis of the ethical orientation to accountability. The authors of the Project report warn that confusing the three kinds of accountability leads to resentment and harm. This echoes the assertions which formed the first part of this paper, the discussion of general questions regarding accountability and educational accountability.

A Saskatchewan example of school based evaluation is the manual and training system developed by a group of Saskatchewan educators in a project undertaken by the Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit for Saskatchewan Education (Burgess, 1987). It is intended to help schools and teachers improve their own programs in cooperation with the communities in which they live.

3. Action research.

This is another philosophy which assumes that measures taken to improve the operation of schools and the work of teachers must rest primarily in the hands of teachers. Persons holding this view assume that in order to understand societal institutions it is necessary to discover the personal meaning which events within them have for each and all of those persons involved. If we understand the meaning which specific events in schools have for individual students and teachers we will better understand the effects of schooling on them. We will also understand the beliefs which form the basis of life in that institution and which form the meaning which events have for individuals. Persons holding this view also assume that all institutions and all events within institutions serve the interests of some group or groups of persons. In order to understand how the institution works, and thus change it should that seem required, we must know who benefits from keeping the institution as it is. If the interests of students are not being served well, someone else is benefitting. That group will resist change. Only if we know about this can we plan successful reform.

To carry out action research, teachers, working in their own schools, gather data and make judgments about the effectiveness and worth of the programs and methods used in that school. They collect data, and analyze it to discover the meanings which events have for different persons involved with the school. Teachers ask questions such as, 'Who benefits from this practice?' If they do not believe that the answers which they reach are the best ones for students, or if they believe that the practices, meanings, and benefits add up to situations which are ethically indefensible, teachers hold themselves and their school accountable for changing those practices. Action research is intended to help those who use it to become positively critical of their own practice and to help them to change that practice if they think it necessary to do so. Sockett (1982, pp. 18-19) summarizes this view by saying that persons taking this stance believe that educators evaluate teachers and schools, that is to say themselves, by judging the quality of the practices or processes which they see in operation. He suggests that to ensure that their evaluation is trustworthy and practicable, teachers must seek self-government, be clear about the nature of academic freedom in the context of compulsory schooling, and devise codes of professional conduct which teachers can use as standards to which to compare their own professional practice.

Kemmis (1986, p. 123) reminds that "accountability is not a matter of distribution of praise and blame." All of those involved in the educational institution must share the responsibility of being accountable just as they are each constrained by the actions of the others. Standards must be negotiated and arrived at by consensus, rather than being based on some external view of truth and justice, Kemmis says.

Judgments about accountability, about the worth of a specific program or school, should be the result of negotiation among all concerned with the worth of that school.

Sirotnik and Oakes (1986, p. 81) believe that the only school in which reform or change is possible is one which is constantly renewing itself. In order to renew itself a school needs all of the information, all of the ways of understanding, which are available to it. They believe that schools and the teachers in them should use any and all methods available to gather data about their schools, measurement oriented methods and methods which depend on rationality alike. Then they recommend critical reflection on that information, on information about the measurement of results and on the information about the meaning of events in institutions for individuals. This reflection will reveal the interests being served by things as they are in the school. Once teachers are aware of these they can plan and carry out school reform. Sirotnik and Oakes do not see this as a one-shot effort but as a constant process, a process of self-renewal which is on-going. Only when this process is in place, they believe, will a school be a good school. Only then will the school be able to render an account of itself which is acceptable to its community and faithful to its purpose.

Summary

It is possible to talk about and plan for accountability procedures in terms of schools as organizations using the assumptions of both the measurement and the ethical orientations toward accountability. However, as we have seen, a school can only be accountable in terms of the actions and beliefs of its teachers. While it is possible to consider these actions and beliefs collectively, the school can only explain its successes or failures and plan for change in terms of the individuals within it. It is simply confusing to talk as if a school could do anything, including being accountable. It is the people in the school who do the work and who must be held, and/or, hold themselves accountable.

TWO EXPLANATIONS FOR THE DIFFICULTY WHICH EDUCATORS EXPERIENCE IN BEING CLEAR ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY

Although this paper has attempted to clarify the notion of accountability, it has not addressed the ancillary issue of the difficulty of being clear about this concern. It seems a very emotional issue, one in which people tend to be very determined to maintain the supremacy of their own viewpoints. This section briefly outlines two explanations for this. The first accepts the assumptions which underlie the measurement orientation of accountability. The second is based on the assumptions which form the foundation of the ethical orientation to accountability.

Loosely and Tightly Coupled Organizations

This explanation of the way schools work suggests that there are two different kinds of organizations, organizations which are 'tightly-coupled' and organizations which are 'loosely-coupled.' Tightly coupled organizations are easy to change because they have a strong, clear, easily controlled chain of command. The members of such organizations have a strong commitment to an organizational identity. Authority is hierarchical and strongly enforced. Loosely coupled organizations are more difficult to change. They are less hierarchical, and the chain of command is diffuse and badly enforced. They have a weak organizational identity. The members of these organizations do not feel a strong attachment to them which would cause them to obey directives unquestioningly. Leadership in these organizations must be flexible and collaborative if it is to be effective. Of course schools are loosely coupled organizations, in this analysis.

Lutz (1986, p. 151) questions this analysis. He wonders if the claim that educational organizations are loosely coupled is merely a result of the fact that in educational organizations some decisions are made in structures which are authoritative and some are made by individuals in collaboration. The result is an organization which appears to be loosely coupled throughout but is not. If this is true then this theory will have little power to help us understand the difficulties which educators and educational institutions have dealing with and demonstrating accountability. If coupling theory is not applicable to educational organizations, this may be because schools are not sophisticated technological institutions, as are those organizations which are described as tightly coupled. Schools, they say, are better described as ecological forms. Because they are poorly developed technologically they actively resist the tight control which characterizes technologically developed institutions. They react by 'decoupling' the administrative from the instructional functions. This makes it very difficult for any change introduced by administration to be successfully implemented.

Meyer and Rowan introduce doubt that explanations of the nature of schools which emphasize their bureaucratic nature do anything but muddy attempts to understand schools well enough to change or improve them, or to find ways in which they may be reasonably held accountable.

The Metaphors We Use to Talk About Schools

House (1986b) tries to understand the confusion which prevails when we attempt to understand how to understand schools and education well enough to change them or to be reasonable and successful in attempts to hold them accountable. He has identified and analyzed the metaphors which people use when they talk about schools. Understanding these metaphors, he says, helps us to understand the assumptions and beliefs which form our talk and our practice as educators.

In North America the dominant metaphor is industrial. We talk of time, costs, procedures, and products; of delivery systems and monitoring. Sometimes the metaphor is of a machine. Programs consist of elements, they are put into operation, have intervention

strategies built into them, operate according to a design, can be fine tuned, or tested. "Accountability means conformity to program specifications" (House, 1986b, p. 34).

At other times we think of education as a series of pipelines or conduits, House says. We can change the outflow, or outcome in student achievement, of the conduit by changing the level of certain variables which we input to the conduit, the program. All of the industrial metaphors assume that schools can be organized to directly cause learning the way a certain mixture of ingredients and procedures results in a car, or the transfer of oil from one place to another. The metaphors have the standards which we will use to judge success or failure, to determine accountability, inherent within them. If we change the metaphor we change the standards (Scheffler, 1965). The standards of the industrial metaphors are standards by which one measures.

The metaphor which underlies some of the rationalist, or ethically-oriented, forms of accountability talk of shedding light or of reacting to needs. These metaphors change the focus of evaluation and accountability. The persons who use the program are the focus now, rather than the efficient operation of the program. The adequacy of the program to meet their needs, its sensitivity to their feelings and beliefs becomes the standard by which the program is evaluated and which forms the basis for accountability.

Metaphors are not in themselves good or bad, useful or useless, harmful or helpful. Each serves a different purpose. Each metaphor indicates the assumptions which the persons who use it hold about the nature and conduct of education. These metaphors are so much a part of our language that we don't even notice them. We are unaware that they form the basis for our judgments. When we are faced with irreconcilable differences in our talk and practice we can't understand why they exist, and why they are so hard to ignore. If we look at the metaphors we use and try to understand the assumptions about standards, about good and bad education, about the purposes of education, which they reveal, we may perhaps begin to understand why trying to be clear about accountability usually proves so difficult. "The dominant metaphors shape our actions. But not all metaphors are equally good for the purposes they are supposed to serve" (House, 1986b, p. 47).

Accountability is a diverse and slippery concept. When you add to it the vast diversity which is found in talk about education, it is little wonder that it is so difficult to be clear about educational accountability. The analyses presented in this section, while they proceed from different premises, both help us to understand why the concept of educational accountability is so slippery and what we might do to be more successful in pinning it down.

CONCLUSION

The concept of accountability has many meanings for different people and in different circumstances. Alkin (1972) said that it was defining the efficiency and effectiveness of specific parts of the educational program as revealed by measurement of the progress of students. Taylor (1978) defined it as systematic self-monitoring by individuals entrusted with resources and a task. Bailey (1980) said that it was personal and due to oneself rather than to others. Greene (1973) wanted us to view it as choosing ourselves and as being necessary to the continuation of a free society. Kemmis (1986) said that it was neither praise nor blame, but the understanding and the means to ensure the control of education by those whose experience it is. We have seen that each definition is based on a set of beliefs about education, about knowing, about society, about what is right and wrong. We have seen that there is no one right definition, but merely definitions which express approaches to accountability and to education which serve different purposes, strive to meet different goals.

A wide variety of ways to ensure accountability have been discussed. The difference between organizational and individual accountability has been explored. A wide variety of benefits have been suggested as likely to arise from the implementation of an even wider variety of practices to ensure accountability or to render accounts, and of practices to be used to judge those accounts. Everyone has a vision of what schools should be. Everyone hopes for a certain kind of practice by teachers and believes that this practice will have a specific positive result. These visions are not simple things. They have many different aspects, express many different hopes. It is an extraordinarily difficult task to discover whether or not a particular school system, school, or teacher is acting properly in accordance with that vision. Is that school system or school educating students well within each visionary framework?

As we have seen, the main source of confusion seems to lie in the split between those who put their faith in objectivity and facts as a way to determine the worth of education and of the work of teachers and those who put their faith in the use of subjective, but rational and evidence-based judgment to determine their worth.

Is there any way to reconcile the two? Kemmis, Sirotnik and Oakes believe that there is. They suggest that aspects of both are useful, methods from both will yield useful information, but that both are missing one essential ingredient. They do not emphasize the necessity to be critical, to determine the political and social context and the effect which it has on the work and on the outcomes of the work of schools and teachers. Kemmis, Sirotnik and Oakes want educators, in cooperation with community members, to use the methods of the measurement view to gather information. They want educators and community members to scrutinize that information and to discover from each other the meanings which it and other educational events have for them. Then, they suggest the use of critical reflection to discover what interests education, as it is presently organized in their schools, in their practice, is serving. The result they hope, will be a community and educational institutions which have the knowledge and understanding to

take control of education and use education to serve the interests of the community, which includes the educators, and of the students.

Persons who are concerned about educational accountability usually have expectations that education will be conducted according to the best that is known about its practice. They hope that students will learn those things which will enable them to have intellectually, socially, emotionally, and economically satisfying lives. They want good schools. They want their children to be broadly educated. They want schools to ensure the economic future of their children. All of these goals are reasonable. The effectiveness of the practice of teachers in regard to each of these goals can be judged.

Problems in determining the worth of the practice of teachers and schools arise when we fail to be clear about the assumptions which underlie our views of education, which underlie our discussion about and practice of accountability. They arise when simple answers to complex problems are sought and accepted. We can and should measure the degree to which learners are able to read, write, spell, compute. We should expect teachers and schools to ensure that the students entrusted to them learn these things. But, we cannot pretend to be able to measure the breadth of a learner's understanding. We can listen and talk to learners. We can make rational, evidentially-founded judgments of their understanding. We can expect teachers to create environments in which our present state of knowledge about learning suggests it is likely that learners will increase their understanding of human experience. We can expect teachers to do their very best to maximize benefits to all of their students and minimize harm. We cannot hold them directly responsible for many of these benefits, nor accountable for many of the harms. Human life and interaction, especially in modern society is too complex, too diverse, to allow teachers that much control over what their students learn, and even if society was simple, human beings, and students are human beings, have free will, they hold values and beliefs, they make choices. No human being has yet found a way to control all of the choices which another human being makes, not even, I believe, all of the choices made by a very young child. Therefore no educator, no school, can be held directly accountable for what students learn or do not learn in the vast majority of instances of human knowledge.

What is clear as a result of this discussion of accountability is the need to be clear when discussing accountability. There are many valid ways to approach the topic and to require that educators and teachers be accountable. The overwhelming faith in simple solutions which has often marked educational discussion and action in North America is very dangerous. We must be always aware that there is more than one kind of accountability. There are many ways to determine the worth of the work of teachers and schools. If we are interested in observable ends we may determine accountability using empirical means. If we are interested in less tangible goals we may determine accountability using rational means. Whatever means we use, teachers are not machines, they are human. We must not forget that. We must not let our concern for accountability put our educational systems out of balance. The tangible and the intangible are both necessary to the education of human beings. We must determine accountability without

making one of the kinds of goals and means of education more important than the other. This requires clarity.

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